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Frontispiece.]

THE AUTHOR ON HIS MARE, "ROSEWATER" (1936).

[*W. Egan.*

PAMELA
AND HER PONY "FLASH"

BY

ANTONIO P. FACHIRI
AUTHOR OF "RIDING ALONG"

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FOREWORD

MANY of you girls and boys have grown up surrounded by horses, and therefore know quite a lot about them, in which case a simple tale about man's best friend should make its appeal to you, because there are few things about horses which do not bear re-telling.

On the other hand, some children have been cut off from contact with ponies merely by reason of their parents never having themselves owned horses in their youth. They crave for a small four-footed little beast which they can, in turn, fondle and ride, but fear that they might as well cry for the moon as to confide in Dad and Mum that this is their heart's desire. Pamela, for instance, was such a child, but I am going to show you how she won her case by being given *Flash*, and thereafter became such a good little horsewoman that she rode at Olympia (1935) by the time she was ten years old.

Pamela is a real child, and this is a true story. In fact, you may run across her at some future time, in which case you will recognise her because of the photographs which illustrate the text of this story.

What I want you to bear in mind is that any of you girls can have the same experiences as Pamela enjoys (and this applies to your brothers as well), so I hope you will like this tale and also benefit from the riding hints I have given you in each chapter.

A. P. F.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

THE author wishes to express his thanks to the *Daily Mail* for their courtesy in allowing him to publish, in its full text, the serial which ran, in a very abridged form, under this title in the Boys' and Girls' Section of that newspaper from January to April 1936.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCING PAMELA	1
II.	PAMELA IN THE SADDLE	4
III.	MOUNTING AND DISMOUNTING	7
IV.	PAMELA TAKES A TOSS	10
V.	THE WRONG KIND OF PONIES	13
VI.	THE RIGHT KIND OF PONIES	16
VII.	INTRODUCING "FLASH"	19
VIII.	HOW TO BRIDLE AND SADDLE A PONY	22
IX.	ON "THUMBS-UP" RIDING	25
X.	"FLASH" LEARNS OBEDIENCE	28
XI.	AT THE RIDING-SCHOOL IN THE COUNTRY	31
XII.	"FLASH" TAKES KINDLY TO JUMPING	34
XIII.	AT THE PONY SHOW, ISLINGTON (1935)	37
XIV.	PAMELA RIDES AT THE HORSE SHOW	41
XV.	REHEARSING FOR OLYMPIA	45
XVI.	AT OLYMPIA	48
XVII.	PAMELA'S FIRST EXPERIENCES IN THE HUNTING-FIELD	52
XVIII.	"CHILDREN'S DAY" WITH HOUNDS	58

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
The Author on his Mare "Rosewater" (1936)	*Frontispiece*
Pamela ready for her First Ride	2
Pamela makes Friends with the School's Brown Pony	4
Pamela now meets the Piebald Pony she will next Ride	8
The Piebald and Pamela temporarily part Company!	10
Shetlands, which are the Wrong Breed for Children to Ride	14
A Well-bred Pony—Narrow, and of the Right Type and Temperament	16
Pamela greets "Flash" as her very Own	20
Pamela and "Flash" are now the Best of Pals	22
Pamela's Young Friends call for her to join them in an Outing	26
Pamela and "Flash" out on their Own	28
The Riding Establishment where Pamela spent a Happy Week and was taught how to Jump	32
Pamela practises Jumping on "Flash"	34
The Winner of the Second Prize in Children's Class at Islington (1935)	38
A Group of Youngsters awaiting their Class to be called at a Horse Show	42
Pamela jumping over a Tennis Net during Rehearsal for Olympia	46
Pamela at Olympia, June 1935	48
Pamela's First Day out with Hounds	52
Pamela at the Children's Day Meet	58

Pamela and Her Pony *Flash*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCING PAMELA

PAMELA was only a little girl, but she had outgrown dolls and even Teddy Bears. She was her father's pet, and so she usually got what she wanted.

One Sunday, as he was finishing his breakfast and looking forward to a round of golf, she said :

" Daddy, *please* give me a pony."

" Certainly, darling ; later on."

" *Now*, Daddy."

In a good humour, he said that she was too young ; ordinarily he would have been angry. Pamela, however, remarked (oh, very sweetly !) :

" But I'm eight years old now, and I heard that wonderful Mr. Rider, who is so good with horses, say that children should begin to learn when they are six ! "

The car was at the door. Father was in a hurry, but, when he saw Pamela looking hurt, he chucked her under the chin, smiled, and whispered :

"Daddy is not rich any longer; he'll buy you that pony when times are better. I hope that times soon *will* be better."

Pamela told him how sorry she was to hear of his bad luck, and said that he was not to worry about the pony until he became rich again, and that she loved him very dearly.

. . . . . .

Three hours later, at the golf clubhouse, Pamela's father told his friends how thoughtful and kind she had been when he mentioned that he was poor. He admitted that he was not really poor at all. Other fathers smiled. But a bachelor spoke up for her and, like a knight of old, acted as her champion.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," he said, rather angrily. "If I had a lovely little girl like yours, I'd do everything I could to give her that pony, for she has behaved like a brick. I fail to see the joke."

Some of the men clapped at this.

. . . . . .

A week passed. Father and daughter were again sitting at Sunday breakfast. He was imagining some wonderful drives to be made in an hour's time. Pamela was thinking sadly about that pony—not to be hers for a long, long while, she feared.

Suddenly Father leaned across the table and asked:

"Are you sure, *quite* sure, Pam, that you would rather learn to ride than to play golf?"

Naturally, there was only one answer. It was settled straight away that if she promised to learn how to ride properly, she would have a pony. Pamela

[*Sport & General.*

PAMELA READY FOR HER FIRST RIDE.

promised, and then she ran to the other side of the table and kissed her father gratefully. He, too, was glad.

Lessons were arranged. Mother now stepped into the picture—and a tailor's shop. There Pamela was fitted for tiny fawn-coloured jodhpurs (or riding-breeches) and a tweed jacket ; at other shops, Mother bought her the right kind of shoes, a soft shirt with collar, and a charming wee beret.

She looked very sweet as she walked to the Riding-School that was nearby, and when shown into the Ring, saw a dozen or more people of all ages circling around on horses large and small, and she noticed that they all seemed to be enjoying themselves thoroughly.

A very small brown creature with four legs, head at one end, tail at the other, was brought alongside of the mounting-block. It gazed at her kindly, and tried to smell her hand.

Pamela's parents had forgotten to tell her that little girls should carry sugar in their pockets when coming into contact with ponies, but an attendant stepped forward with such " ammunition " and showed her how to place the lumps in the palm of her hand, keeping all fingers outstretched.

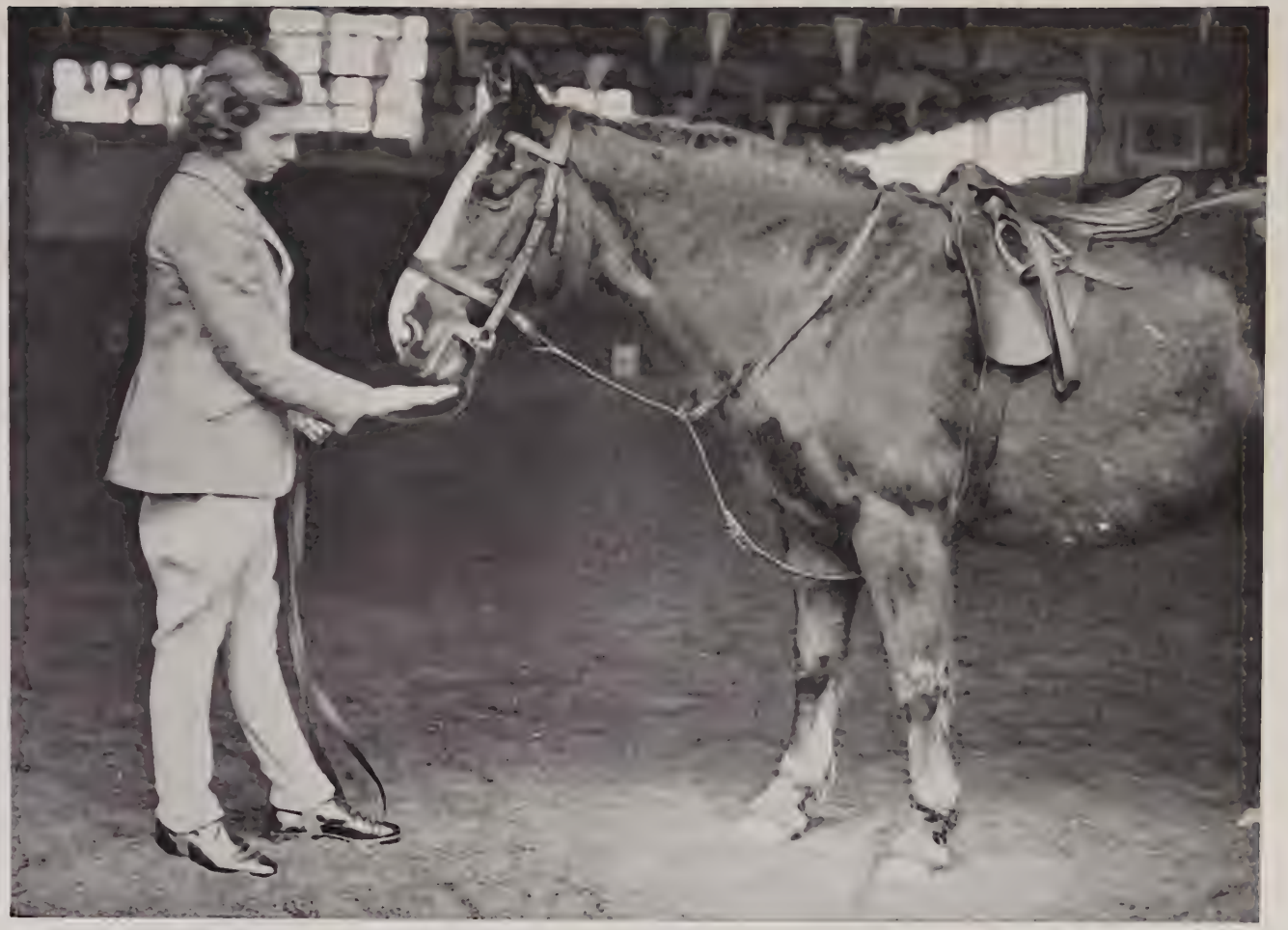
Pamela was then lifted on to the saddle, her feet were thrust into stirrups, and very thin reins were inserted between her fingers. The instructor came up alongside, astride a big horse, and the lesson began.

CHAPTER TWO

PAMELA IN THE SADDLE

PAMELA was now thoroughly excited. You can guess how thrilled she felt, for wouldn't you feel just the same? If you didn't—well, it would be doubtful if you would ever make good horsewomen. Learning to ride needs patience, it is true, but it's much more fun if you are eager and if you are *ready* to enjoy yourself thoroughly.

Pamela's riding-master was a sensible sort of man. Indeed, he was a very wise one. After greeting her pleasantly and quietly, he told her that she was about to begin a great adventure, which, unlike so many adventures, was free of danger—yet full of thrills. Full, too, of quiet pleasures. He explained that the saddle was a sort of chair, and that, on this chair made of leather, she would be carried along at the speed *she* desired; she would soon learn just how to get her pony to go at the desired pace—great fun, this part of her adventure. She was asked not to think of him as a teacher, but as a friendly guide. He then suggested that she would feel much more at ease, much more comfortable, if she *relaxed*—that is, let herself go with the pony's movements—and did not, as too many children do, hold herself stiffly.



PAMELA MAKES FRIENDS WITH THE SCHOOL'S BROWN PONY.

[*Sport & General.*

Soon she was in the saddle. She remembered what she had been told about the moving arm-chair; in a very few minutes she began to take an interest in the pony that carried this chair, the saddle with her in it. When he saw that she was quickly growing used to her pony moving at a walk, he told her that presently she would trot, and that she would find trotting less easy and smooth than walking, because, in trotting, a pony bumps up and down. Perhaps, at the very first, she, too, would be bumped up and down; but, he said, she wouldn't be long in learning how to go *with* the movement of her lovely little pony; in fact, when she had learned this, she would almost fancy she was riding in a motor-car instead of on a pony's back.

When she had ridden for a few minutes more at a walk and begun to think that this was really much too easy, the Riding-Master asked her if she were happy and would she like to trot for a little while. Laughing gaily, Pamela replied, "Of course, that's just what I'm longing to do!"

The pony trotted. And Pamela didn't like this . . . not one little bit. She found herself being bumped higher and higher and was growing—well, not frightened, for there was, she knew, nothing to make her afraid, but perhaps a little nervous. Yet she would not say so.

The Master, however, stopped his horse and her pony in the middle of the Ring. He smilingly showed her how to rise and then sink gently back into the saddle. She tried this a dozen times on the pony at rest; then on the pony in motion, the Master

holding her arm and thus raising her and pressing her down again into the saddle as her mount trotted sedately along. To her surprise, she discovered that this was splendid fun and not difficult at all. She soon became confident, and her confidence made it easier still for her to rise and fall to the pony's movements.

By the time she had had her third lesson, she enjoyed trotting as much as walking: she had mastered the knack of what is called "rising to the trot."

CHAPTER THREE

MOUNTING AND DISMOUNTING

AFTER riding every day for over a fortnight, Pamela began to feel very much at home in the saddle. I rather think that she fancied herself, just a little, as a horsewoman, and had day-dreams in which she pictured herself riding at Olympia.

It had not taken her long to learn to rise to the trot. She could now do it without counting " one, two, three," as she had done at first. Although she did not know it (to tell you the truth, she did not even think about it !), she was fast finding her *balance*. Now, it is balance which makes cantering a joy, for at such a pace one's pony comes very near to giving one the feeling of gliding along, as the Riding-Master had explained to her, the very first time she rode.

But she was a wee bit nervous when he began to show her how to mount her pony from the ground. She quickly saw, however, that it was very necessary for her to learn how to do this. She quite understood it all, when he said, " Suppose that you were riding in the country and that, ten miles or so from home, you had to dismount, for some reason or other. You'd feel rather silly if you were unable to remount and so had to lead your pony back—ten

miles, don't forget—to the stables : all the way on foot ! "

Pamela knew that well-trained horses and ponies usually stood still while their riders mounted, but, as ponies are animals and not machines, they have wills and whimsies of their own : although they may stand stock-still on, say, six days in the week, yet on the seventh they may be restless or take fright.

She also knew that she had to mount on the pony's left side—always called its near side. She was told by the Riding-Master how to approach her pony when she was preparing to hoist herself into the saddle. Here, word for word, is what he said : " The first thing to do is to pick up the reins loosely and hold them in your left hand. Then you face towards the pony's tail, catch hold of the left stirrup-iron and place your left toe in it. (As you see, everything so far is *left*.) Now hoist yourself up by grasping the front of the saddle with the same hand (the left) that holds the reins, but with your *right* hand, which is free, you catch hold of the back of the saddle to help you pull yourself up on to it."

Pamela thought to herself, " Oh dear ! This is all very difficult ! " But she soon found that, with a little practice, it was surprisingly easy.

She also found that, as she mounted on the left, so she dismounted on the left side of her pony. She learnt that, in dismounting, she had first to take her right foot out of the stirrup-iron ; then to use her left foot as a lever till she was near the ground, and finally, at that point, to slip her foot free, and so find herself safely on the ground.

PAMELA NOW MEETS THE PIEBALD PONY SHE WILL NEXT RIDE. [*Sport & General.*

In short, she discovered—with what delight, I leave it to *you* to imagine—that mounting and dismounting were easy enough. But she set herself to do these things smoothly and quietly. She grasped the golden rule of mounting: not to flop into the saddle, but to arrive there so quietly, so smoothly, that one's pony hardly knows one has done so.

CHAPTER FOUR

PAMELA TAKES A TOSS

PAMELA made splendid progress. She was now able to walk, trot, and canter—like most children, she found cantering easier than trotting—whenever she wished ; she was actually feeling sorry for that batch of beginners which, as he used to do with her, the Riding-Master kept by his side !

The little brown pony of her early lessons had been displaced by a piebald cob ; the cob that, at this stage of a learner's progress, always displaced the pony.

Well, one day as she was trotting along by herself (and very nicely too), an ill-mannered loutish boy of sixteen, disliked by all, entered the Ring. In addition to being conceited and over-proud, he was obviously not a true horseman.

Every time this youth trotted past our little friend Pamela, his horse crowded hers against the wall ; this caused the piebald cob to fidget and to put his ears flat back against his head—a sign of horsey annoyance that Pamela could hardly be expected to recognise. Gaily she went on circling the Ring.

Presently the youth began cantering wildly, crowding Pamela against the wall ; the cob lowered its head and lashed upward with its heels, and over its head went Pamela !

[*Sport & General.*

THE PIEBALD AND PAMELA TEMPORARILY PART COMPANY!

For a moment she was almost stunned. She thought she was dead. She thought she must be badly hurt. She thought that stretcher-bearers would rush to her assistance. She thought that as the tan-bark strewn on the track was soft, so it had prevented injury. She thought that the tan-bark had a very unpleasant smell. She thought she would sit up. She did ; only to see the cob grinning at her. Indeed, the cob looked so very funny that she burst out laughing, still rather surprised, however, that she could laugh and that she was not crying with the pain that she believed she ought to be feeling.

" Why are we waiting, Pamela ? " she heard the Riding-Master inquire in his kind, sympathetic way. She took it for granted that he meant her to go to the dressing-room and have some nice drink after this terrifying experience. She looked up at him in amazement when she heard him calmly tell her that she was expected to remount her naughty steed, which was at this moment looking rather like a big donkey. Surely he could not be so heartless ?

" Up you go ! " the Riding-Master said, with a smile ; he gently pressed her foot into the stirrup. She knew that to refuse would be bad form and ever so unsporting : she had delightful manners and was very sporting, so what did she do ? She obeyed.

The Riding-Master kept by her side as she rode along. The piebald, perhaps feeling that it had rather misbehaved, " acted the perfect little gentleman." Pamela soon forgot her tumble : soon was greatly enjoying her ride.

The stupid lout who had caused her mishap now

came up to them and, instead of apologising to her, said in the most irritatingly patronising tone, " Hard luck, miss ; maybe you'll learn how to ride *some* day ! " Luckily, she was too young to understand exactly what the Riding-Master (who, at the best of times, disliked the youth) said to him, but she saw him slink away, dismount, and depart—never to return.

So little was she hurt, so little was she frightened, that the next afternoon saw Pamela again riding the piebald. Horse and rider were now friends, and the cob respected her for having remounted soon after her fall. She did, however, learn that she should have remounted immediately, not only to make quite sure of gaining the cob's respect, but also to give right-of-way to any other rider that might have been coming along, perhaps close behind her. But she was very glad to know that she could fall without being hurt, and this knowledge gave her confidence.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE WRONG KIND OF PONIES

SUNDAY continued to be Pamela's lucky day, for on the very next Sunday her father's best friend called for him to play a very special match. Father was in a good mood, and invited both his wife and his little daughter to go with him to the golf club. Pamela was delighted.

Soon after they reached the clubhouse a tall, handsome man, bronzed as nearly all handsome men are, strolled to the table where the three were sitting. Although Pamela's mother was as charming as she was pretty, this man gazed, not at *her*, but at her daughter.

" So this is Pamela ? "

Being told that it was indeed Pamela, he turned and asked :

" Has your Daddy given you the pony ? "

Her father explained that he was at present too busy with his work to be able to see about buying a pony, and that his week-ends were devoted to golf. He added, however, that at the Riding-School they were very pleased with Pamela's progress, and that she already showed signs of becoming a first-class little horsewoman. (The handsome man was the

one who had spoken up for Pamela several weeks before, and we will call him—from now on—the Knight.)

When another man said that Shetland ponies were "the thing" for children beginning to ride, the Knight said: "No! Of all four-footed beasts, Shetland ponies are children's worst enemies." He went on to explain that Shetlands were usually stubborn and bad-tempered; also, that young riders required *narrow* ponies to ride, not fat tubs!

At this point, Father's great friend broke in with a silly story about having given his boy a one-eyed pony that moved like a crab—sideways, because of being half blind—but was good enough for a novice. Then another man boasted that he was going to give his daughter, who was fifteen years old, a *real horse* that had plenty of spirit and good looks. But he confessed that it had a very hard mouth. "Yet, that won't matter, for my girl is an athlete and quite capable of managing any horse through sheer muscular strength."

And so the talk and the stories continued until Pamela began to wonder what it was all about. She thought that some of the children were not very well treated, for she had read that a child's first pony had a lot to do with the education of young riders, and that great care should be taken by parents in choosing it.

Her new friend, the Knight, turned quietly to her father:

"I'll talk to you later about this, and tell you about ponies suitable for children, especially when

they are beginners. I'd do it now, but you can see that there's no chance of talking sense with this crowd joking and romancing."

Her mother said gratefully: "This is very kind of you. Pamela, I'm sure, feels the same as I do. May I suggest that you come to dinner this evening?"

He accepted.

But the result of the Knight's advice during that talk must be told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

THE RIGHT KIND OF PONIES

AFTER coffee that evening, Pamela's father asked the Knight to tell him what sort of pony should be bought for her. She was very sorry not to be there to hear what he said, for she guessed that it would be important. But this is what she was told about it.

The Knight (who, you doubtless remember, had already been a very good friend to Pamela) explained that Shetland ponies should not be given to children because they were chubby little creatures on which a saddle cannot be properly fitted, and because a child-rider cannot, on account of their barrel-shaped form, get a firm grip on their flanks with their knees. Also, Shetlands are generally very obstinate; even a little rough at times. In short, remarked the Knight, Shetlands are better suited for carrying loads of merchandise than for carrying that much more precious and easily hurt cargo—children.

The best, the ideal pony for a child should be narrowly built (*not* like a great barrel); and docile.

A well-bred pony is exactly like a full-sized, well-bred horse, except that it is built on a smaller

scale. And, on it the child-rider feels just as a grown-up does on his bigger mount.

Pamela, said the Knight, would find that if she had a well-shouldered pony (Shetlands and other such ponies do not possess good shoulders), she would be comfortable on its back. It didn't matter whether the pony was beautiful, so long as it was well shaped.

Now for the pony's manners and temper ! Every horse's nature is, really, good tempered and is easily managed, *provided* that it has been carefully trained (or "broken in," as they call it), and that, if it changes hands, its new owner and the groom treat it kindly and sensibly. Such a horse, especially such a pony, will serve its rider well, for it is well-formed, well-mannered, obedient.

The Knight went on to explain to Pamela's parents, who were now thoroughly interested in what he had to say and very eager to learn all they could from him, that the golfer who had said that his little boy was riding a pony blind in one eye, and therefore moving lop-sidedly, was very thoughtless. Had this golfer given the boy a well-bred, well-shaped pony without fault, the boy would have been able, from the start, to "steer" correctly ; if he now got a two-eyed pony, he would have to learn all over again.

The Knight then spoke of the man who was so proud of his daughter being able to manage, by strength alone, a horse whose mouth had been ruined. He said that this girl was spoiling her "hands"—her touch with horses—for ever. What would she

do if she got a horse with a light, delicate mouth ? She would probably, by her rough treatment, cause this new mount to bolt or else to buck her off.

He explained, very carefully, that Pamela's first pony was more important than any that she might have later on. That first pony should be the best that her parents could afford to buy. Her father and mother, dreading to make some mistake as bad as those of the two parents just mentioned, turned to the Knight and begged him to find a pony for their little daughter. (Not that Pamela considered herself little !)

" As luck has it," he said, " I saw, only last week, just the pony : well-bred, narrow, with small head, good shoulders, intelligent eyes, short back, and charming manners. Good looks, too ! "

It was arranged, straightaway, that the dealer should bring the pony round to the house on the very next Wednesday. The Knight departed, happy in what he knew would be Pamela's happiness ; glad, too, that his friend's gardener, having once been a groom, could look after the pony properly.

CHAPTER SEVEN

INTRODUCING "FLASH"

PAMELA was very excited, for the horse-dealer was on his way to deliver *Flash*, the pony. Her very own pony.

Why! there came *Flash*, looking adorable as he was brought to a halt at her side—a small pony, but most attractive. Pamela gazed happily at him until the gardener-groom, feeling rather important to have charge of a living creature as well as of his old lawn-mowers and spades, came to lead him away to his newly made box. Straw served as bedding, a manger was fixed to the wall, and a brightly painted bucket of clear water stood where the pony could see it plainly and get at it easily.

At first, *Flash* felt lonely, just as human beings do on such occasions. But the gardener's encouraging words and Pamela's welcoming pats soon made him feel at home; also, she gave him some lumps of sugar. (The next day she would give him carrots —sliced, *not* whole.) *Flash* guessed that he was with kind people.

And well he might, for Pamela and the groom knew that if a pony does only light work, it should not have oats; its food should consist of hay, grass (if possible), bran, carrots.

When she went the next morning, before breakfast, to greet *Flash* with sliced carrots, she spoke to him gently before going alongside him. Horses have very sharp hearing and are easily startled; but the human voice, especially if quiet and cheerful, has an almost magical effect on them.

Flash turned round, pleased to see his little mistress. She went to his head and stroked it softly, speaking to him while she stroked. She gave him his carrots, which he so evidently enjoyed that she had to pat and talk to him again before she walked quietly out of the box and went off to her own breakfast.

. . . . . .

A riding-master was to call for her at eleven o'clock every day for several weeks and accompany her on her rides, for it would have been both silly and rash to send her out alone until she and the pony became firm friends, no matter how "good" the pony was supposed to be.

The instructor was glad to see that she mounted correctly—that *Flash*, well trained, stood still as she did so; at a signal for him to move forward she pressed both heels gently into his sides and whispered "Come on!" The pony, true to his excellent breeding, welcomed the excitement of sallying forth: with ears well forward, he took smart little steps in order to keep up with the Riding-Master's mount.

Pamela remembered that she was *never* to allow *Flash* (or any other horse) to break into a trot from a walk, or into a canter from a trot, unless she gave him an order with her heels. She also remembered

that, when about to slacken pace, it was quite correct to say "whoa" or "steady" as a signal before tightening her reins—but that, always—she must speak quietly to her mount, just as if she were having a friendly talk with it.

Her instructor, who seemed to be—and *was*—as nice as her first riding-master had been, told her that if she learnt properly from the beginning, she would ride confidently and properly whether in the ring or on the road. She said, "Yes, it will be much better if I can ride like a grown-up person wherever I happen to be, and then, perhaps, I'll ride some day at a horse show."

"Quite so, Pamela! At every stage of horsemanship, there is something new to learn; it'll be much easier if you do that new thing *correctly*. And next week I shall tell you how to bridle and saddle your pony."

CHAPTER EIGHT

HOW TO BRIDLE AND SADDLE A PONY

A MONTH had passed since Pamela received *Flash* as a present. In that month she had grown fonder of him every day.

She learnt several things about a horse. For instance, a horse, though it does not make much of a fuss about people, becomes very fond of those who are kind and understanding. She discovered, too, that her pony knew she was approaching long before he could see her : simply by the sound of her footsteps. Her Riding-Master told her that *Flash* would not pine for her if he were to change masters in the way a dog would if *he* changed masters, but that her pony would certainly recognize her after many months or even years of separation.

Pamela, as you have seen, was lucky to have had such a pony at the beginning, for *Flash* was pleasant to look at ; he had brains ; and, both in the stable and while they were out riding, he showed that he liked, and was proud of, being treated as a friend. Naturally, therefore, Pamela became as fond of *Flash* as *Flash* became of her ; soon they were very great friends indeed.

. . . . . .

Up till then, the gardener-groom had saddled

Flash for her and brought him round to the front door all ready to mount. But, one day, the Knight—who, you will remember, had persuaded Pamela's father to give her the pony—told the gardener that he should long ago have taught her how to saddle *Flash*; he was quite severe about it! And to Pamela he said, "Suppose your father sent the gardener to a place ten-or-so miles away to buy some shrubs and forgot to mention to you that he had sent him away. Well, you would come out of doors, intending to spend an hour or two cantering about in the fields near-by. But all you could do would be to sit watching *Flash* nibbling hay in his stall because you don't know how to put bridle and saddle on him. It's absurd, my dear little Pam, that you can't do this. In fact, it won't bear thinking about! You could have *Flash* ready for the road in four or five minutes—if you knew how."

"Won't you tell me," said Pamela, flushing with shame.

"'Course I will, Pam! You're intelligent, so you must be interested in those leather and steel things which hang just outside *Flash's* box—or, as some call it, stall. You have probably noticed that the bit is sewn into the bridle, as are the reins—very thin reins, thanks to me. Also that a saddle has a girth, leathers, and irons. By the way, most beginners talk of stirrups, which should be called *irons*; and of stirrup-leathers, which are properly called *leathers*."

"Yes, I do know that."

The Knight took her to where the things were hanging. "Now, listen," he said, with a charming smile. "Pick up the bridle by the crown-piece (the

top) with your *left* hand and hold the end of the reins in your right hand. Put the reins over *Flash's* head and let them rest half-way down his neck. Now change hands. Take the crown-piece in your right and, with your left, press the bit against his teeth, which he will open presently and thus let the bit slip into place. Lift the crown-piece towards his ears and pull them, one at a time, through it. You have only to buckle the throat-lash, which *must be left loose.* Understand ? Good ! "

" Well," he continued, " now for the saddle. Get it on the thick part of *Flash's* neck and draw it slowly back to just behind the *withers* (shoulders). Now pull the girths as tight as you can. When you've been riding for a few minutes, test them by slipping your fingers underneath : if you *can*, the girths need tightening : do it straightaway."

Very gently, the Knight showed her again—until, indeed, she could do it properly.

CHAPTER NINE

ON "THUMBS-UP" RIDING

IT was a glorious summer day.

Pamela was riding along bridle-paths and across fields with some friends of much the same age as herself—friends who lived in a country-house not more than a mile from her father's. She was as free and rode as confidently as the grown-ups that she had met in the last half-hour. How she enjoyed being able to guide *Flash* and to make him go at the pace *she* wanted !

Yet she noticed that *Flash* was excitedly prancing about—quite different from the usual sedate pony. Of course, it was the company of the other ponies that did it ; *Flash*, who enjoyed " seeing life " on the road, wished to show how proud he was to have Pamela, his kind little mistress, on his back. In the same way, her friends' ponies were also eager to " show off." She heard murmurs of " Steady there, *Rainbow*," and " Stop it, *Midget*," when they all began to canter.

Flash behaved none too well, what with pulling this way and that, and snatching at his bit. Pamela was puzzled at this " letting-off of steam " by *Flash*, who tried to forge ahead of the other ponies instead of cantering at their side. " Steady, *Flash*, steady ! " she said firmly, hoping that this would quieten him ;

which it did, but only for a moment or two, for off he went again. She felt not only puzzled by his unusual behaviour but a little anxious too.

But the groom that, accompanying the other children, had been watching, now brought his big thoroughbred alongside and laid a hand, for only a minute, on the reins. This, however, was long enough for *Flash* to understand that he had carried the joke too far; he settled into a slow canter and tried to look completely and utterly innocent. (All a bluff: he knew very well that he had no right to behave in this way.)

Pamela asked the groom why *Flash* was being so naughty. He explained that the pony was excited at being out with others of his kind and that this made him "play up." With a polite "Begging your pardon, Miss," he leant down and gently turned her hands over in such a way that her thumbs were uppermost; then he asked her to watch him wriggle his wrist and to note that his hands could be turned this way and that and the other, *so long as* the thumbs pointed upwards.

He asked her if she would care to canter. Pamela was delighted to test the advantages of the thumbs-up way of riding. *Flash* was now behaving so nicely that she began to think it was unnecessary. Suddenly, however, her companions decided to have a race: off they went! Shouts of joy and the thunder of hoofs were heard. This was more than *Flash* could stand, for he wished to join in the fun. Off *he* went too.

Luckily the groom whispered, "Drop your hands,

Miss ! Play his mouth—like this." She saw him wriggling his wrists, his hands hardly moving. She tried to copy him, but not with very much success. All the same, *Flash* did at last become quiet, and the groom said she would soon learn the trick if she remembered the golden rule :

" Keep your thumbs up and your hands down ; make a light, wriggling pressure on the horse's mouth —*don't* tug on the reins."

CHAPTER TEN

"FLASH" LEARNS OBEDIENCE

PAMELA was fast learning how a girl, however small, could handle a pony. *Flash* no longer pulled when cantering alongside the other ponies: Pamela felt very grateful to the groom who had (as you read in the preceding chapter) spoken about the thumbs-up, loose-wristed way of curbing her pony and stopping him from "taking hold" of the bit.

One evening her father came home from town earlier than usual and had a talk with Jones, the gardener-groom. After a while, he noticed her and called out, "Come along with us, Pamela; Jones wants to show me the pony." As she got near the stall, *Flash* greeted her with a low whinny. This surprised her father, who, knowing very little about horses, thought of them as unable, as his motor-car was unable, to express themselves.

Jones suggested that the pony should, now that it was mid-summer, be turned out day and night, in a near-by field until autumn came; he explained that the pasture was good, and that a small clear stream crossed the field at the far end. "We shall need a small shed built near the fence; but it won't cost much."

A few days later *Flash* was set at liberty. How

he enjoyed being at liberty instead of being boxed-up as before. He had a feed of hay and a little bran every morning ; at night, too, the gardener placed food in the shed.

Like all horses that have been made pets, *Flash* always, when Pamela or the gardener went to the field and called him, trotted up—no matter whether he was to receive a carrot or to have bridle and saddle put on. Also, since going to pasture, he was much quieter in the road, for even wandering about a field was good exercise : the enjoyment of being ridden was as great as ever, but there was no longer the same need to " let off steam " as he had felt when he passed twenty-two out of every twenty-four hours in his box.

Pamela, therefore, could now canter along on her pony without his " pulling an ounce," and she could also ride on a loose rein with the happy thought that *Flash* would not go any faster unless she urged him into a gallop.

The Knight, who had dropped into the habit of calling at the house every Saturday morning to take her along with him on his own ride, was delighted with her progress. He told her that it was much harder to keep a horse at a slow canter (which she had learnt to do in such a way that it was no longer any effort for her) than to let the animal break into a gallop of his own accord—as a horse is always inclined to do if he has not been properly trained.

The Knight wished Pamela to learn how to jump. In fact, before mentioning it to her, he had already arranged with her father that she should go to a well-known and excellent riding-school in the country.

There special attention was given to improving youngsters in riding. There, too, in addition to indoor jumping, open-air jumps had been prepared, in a large field, so that children could be taught the correct way of jumping, which is a real art, as she was soon to discover.

The next week, Pamela was accompanied to this school and shown how to "take the jumps."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE RIDING-SCHOOL IN THE COUNTRY

PAMELA'S first day at the Riding Establishment (as it was handsomely called) was full of excitement and pleasure. She felt that she was about to begin a great adventure—as indeed she was.

Although she missed *Flash* during the week spent there, she knew that it was doing her good to be riding strange ponies ; sometimes three different ones in a day. And although the ponies were all well mannered, she soon learnt that each had a character of its own—much as various people differ in character. For instance, one mount needed a lot of prodding with the heels to make it keep up with the others, but the next had to be held in check.

There were three instructors always in attendance at what were called " the Schools." At fairly regular intervals, one of them would ride alongside of Pamela and make her walk, trot, canter with arms resting on hips. This was done to cause her to feel independent of the reins. It would be very important for her to have this feeling when she came, as she did the next day, to receive her first lesson in jumping.

Later on in the day, another School was held, and, this time, the pupils had to ride for a few minutes without stirrups. And so it went on—all sorts of

interesting things to learn and practise. Pamela thought it great fun ; so did all her companions.

The next day, before the morning School began, the Master gave a few sensible hints on jumping. Pamela was surprised to hear how easy it was to jump her pony over a low (or even a high) hurdle *if* she did as she was told. And this was :

" Trot your pony to within a few yards of the hurdle, then let it canter slowly, and, as the pony rises over the jump, lean forward, keeping your hands low and close together." To explain further, an instructor placed his hand on the small of Pamela's back and made her lean (not too far) towards the pony's neck by calling " One, two, three " ; she had to do this slowly and gently.

Pamela then heard that the only thing that might cause her to fall off would be the pony's swerving round the hurdle instead of jumping straight over it. " Oh ! " she thought, " this isn't so nice." But the Master said that these ponies were so well trained that such a thing wouldn't happen : Pamela was happy to learn that she would finish up on the other side of the hurdle still on the pony's back—not on her own back on the tan-bark of the Ring.

After an hour of riding round the Ring, with a few turns of " hands on hips," as on the first day, small hurdles were brought in. Half a dozen pupils jumped ; half a dozen thoroughly enjoyed themselves. So did the ponies. Pamela grew impatient ; yet, at last, *her* turn came. She did as she had been told and, when she heard the Master say " Three," she leant forward. It was all over in a moment ! Thanks

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THE RIDING ESTABLISHMENT WHERE PAMELA SPENT A HAPPY WEEK AND WAS TAUGHT HOW TO JUMP.

to Pamela having by now acquired BALANCE, she felt as safe when her pony was in the air as when he was on the ground—and thought it greater fun.

Again and again the pupils all jumped over the hurdles ; at the end of the School, the Master told Pamela that she was doing splendidly.

On the next day, she jumped the same low hurdles, but on different ponies. On the fourth day, she went over higher hurdles, and then over, first a low and then a high one ; then another low and another high one. That night she wrote to tell her father how she was enjoying it all and how she and *Flash* would enjoy themselves at this jumping game when she returned. " Don't be frightened, Daddy," she added.

And, on the last day, she did again all the things she had learnt before, just to make sure she knew them. But that was in the morning, for in the afternoon some advanced pupils gave an open-air exhibition. You may be sure that Pamela made a note of all their feats. She was a little sad at leaving the School : but how happy when she saw *Flash* again. And what games. . . .

CHAPTER TWELVE

"FLASH" TAKES KINDLY TO JUMPING

PAMELA was delighted to be at home again with her parents. And, of course, with her pony *Flash*. She found that her week at the Riding Establishment had taught her much about horses and about riding. This added knowledge increased her pleasure when, as now every day, she spent hours in the saddle.

The Knight saw the progress she had made, but he asked her not to let *Flash* jump unless he were there. "You see, Pam, you've had only a few lessons. Those lessons were on perfectly trained ponies; and, mark you, in a ring. It's possible that *Flash* might become too excited for a little girl like you to handle. I shall get a boy I know—an excellent horseman—especially over the jumps—to try *Flash* out."

While they were riding together that afternoon, the Knight told her that he would soon be taking her to a horse show; there she would be able to see how well the youngsters rode in the children's classes. "In fact, Pam dear," he said, "if you continue to do as well as you are doing at present, I shall ask your Daddy to let you ride, next month, at a small country show where there would be a special class for very young

riders." Pamela, overjoyed, promised to do all she could to improve her riding.

The Knight went on to tell her that there was always something new to learn about horses and horsemanship, and that she should always keep trying to understand what was passing in a horse's mind. "*Never be careless* when you're riding, Pam. A motor-car acts in exactly the same way on 365 days in a year—366 if it's a leap year. But a horse is an animal with a will and moods of its own: sometimes it will act in an odd, unexpected way.

"For instance, a bird flying out of a near-by thicket wouldn't startle *you*; but it would, as a rule, startle a horse. Horses don't like abrupt movements, or unexpected noises." Pamela nodded. "Horses," continued the Knight, "have grown used to the sight of cars and the noises they make. But they would fidget and perhaps become scared if an aeroplane were to fly low and close to them, because they are not yet accustomed to these machines. And so with other things: only experience will teach you. Remember the old proverb, 'Practice makes perfect.'"

. . . . . .

A few days later, Robert Brown, aged twelve, came with the Knight to try *Flash* over some hurdles. Robert rode *Flash* round the field, first at a walk, then at a trot, and finally at a canter. The Knight explained to Pamela—for he saw she was getting impatient—that no sensible person made a horse jump immediately after coming out of the stables. A horse must "limber up": rid itself of the stiffness that comes from being in a cramped space. To do

this, one should act just as the boy was now acting. Also, the rider—especially if still not very experienced—thus got the chance to settle down into the saddle before putting his mount over the jumps.

At last, Robert made *Flash* trot quietly up to within a few paces of a low hurdle, then gave him a touch of the heel to cause him to canter, and over they both went—a perfect jump! *Flash*, all excitement, pricked up his ears: but the Knight saw that it was the keenness shown by a pony with previous experience of jumping and with a love for the game.

After a few more jumps, Pamela begged the Knight to allow her to try. He did. She nearly forgot the "try-out" pacing, trotting, cantering. These preliminaries finished, she popped over the hurdle as smoothly and easily as she had done at the Riding Establishment.

Over and over again she went. The Knight's praise and Robert's "jolly good," made her very happy.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

AT THE PONY SHOW, ISLINGTON (1935)

THE Knight, who always kept his promises, took Pamela to the National Pony Society's Horse Show, which is held, every March, at the Agricultural Hall, in that somewhat gloomy London suburb—Islington.

Pamela, as you may imagine, went into the seventh heaven at the sight of so many ponies of so many breeds. The Knight explained the difference between the Highland, New Forest, Dartmoor, and Exmoor ponies—all of which make splendid mounts for children. There were also, as she was quick to notice, some beautiful ponies, which the Knight called "little blood-horses," because their fathers (*sires*) and mothers (*dams*) were thoroughbreds. She noticed, too, that these ponies were very excitable, but that their young riders controlled them perfectly.

Before she saw this, however, the Knight led Pam into the restaurant and gave her an excellent lunch. Although very excited, she very soon found that she was enjoying her meal. Not long after they were sitting in the seats that he had reserved in the stand. It was now that the *real* fun began !

First, the Children's Riding Classes : in these, the

ponies were judged. Then the Equitation Tests, in which the children themselves were judged for their horsemanship. It was all excellently organised, and it was carried out with the utmost fairness : which was as well, for in the three Riding Classes the competitors' ages were eleven, thirteen, and the ripe age of fourteen respectively.

Then boys and girls of under thirteen rode ponies under 13.2 hands, and older competitors—they were thirteen or fourteen years old—rode ponies not more than 14.2 in height. If a good pony was shown by a competitor who rode badly, its chances of winning a prize were—naturally enough !—spoilt. But most of these boys and girls, as Pamela saw, rode so well that they could be described as doing full justice to their mounts.

All the competitors entered the Ring at a walk and in single file. Soon the order came for them to trot, then to walk again, and lastly to canter. If a pony tossed its head, pulled, or " played up " at any of these stages, the judges gave it bad marks, for, as the Knight explained, children's ponies must prove that they are even-tempered and well-mannered before they have even a chance to win a prize. Pamela learnt a great deal from seeing all these children riding at once. She noted that they were well balanced in the saddle and that they used their hands lightly and skilfully. Indeed, she found it a most interesting performance, and knew that she was profiting tremendously from seeing it.

" Now, Pam, we shall see something even more interesting," said the Knight ; " the Equitation Tests."

In these, children of different ages competed in separate classes arranged by age-limits ; they had to belong to the Pony Club ; and the ponies had to be owned by either the children themselves or their parents. Here are some of the tests which Pamela saw.

From the Collecting Ring the riders came in pairs. After cantering down the arena, they jumped a rail two feet high. That, of course, was just for the ponies to " warm up." The next jump was a " post and rails," three feet high, after which horse and rider passed between two posts set very close together. There were other jumps—of different heights and kinds. And many other interesting tests. In all of them Pamela was astounded at the ease with which these youngsters went gaily over the jumps and at the sureness of their control over the ponies' paces. Also, she was delighted to see that both riders and mounts thoroughly enjoyed every minute of the performance, which seemed to *them* to be glorious fun.

The Knight, who had often in the past been a judge at these contests, told Pamela that points (" you would call them marks at school, I expect !) were given for the way each jump was cleared, for the style with which it was done, for the evenness of pace, and for the manner in which the competitors kept control of their ponies.

And then the afternoon suddenly ended. " I didn't think it was anything like so late as that," Pamela murmured as she left the hall as if in a dream —from which the Knight awakened her (very

pleasantly, she thought) by saying, "I shall ask Daddy's permission for you to ride at an open-air show to be held next month; there's a Riding Class for *quite* young persons like yourself."

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

PAMELA RIDES AT THE HORSE SHOW

AFTER seeing the children ride so splendidly at the Agricultural Hall, Islington, Pamela was keen to improve her own horsemanship, especially as Daddy had given permission for her to ride in the Children's Class at the Horse Show, recommended by the Knight.

Every day—at least once, often twice—Pamela "schooled" *Flash* in show-ring manners, making him walk, trot, canter, all in a quiet, even way. Sometimes she invited her little friends to join her in these lessons and go through their paces; all of them riding in single file, in order that *Flash* might get used to following the horse in front of him instead of trying to pass it, as he seemed to wish to do at first.

At last came the Horse Show. Pamela found herself riding *Flash* around the Collecting Ring. She did this because the Knight, who was at the Show, had told her that all riders, young or old, benefited by walking their horses and ponies round so small a Ring: it gave the riders the opportunity to settle down into the saddle; their mounts to get used to the Ring and the crowd.

A bugle sounded. The children filed into the

Ring. Pamela was No. 8—a fact that the onlookers could learn from the cardboard number-plate tied on her back by a piece of tape going round her waist. Actually she was fifth in the line of procession, for the riders' numbers have nothing to do with the order in which they enter the Ring ; the competitors are free to choose their leader. Pamela was very pleased to notice that one of her young girl friends entered the Ring immediately in front of her.

Flash was a little excited at seeing so many people by the ring-side, but had quietened down by the time that the order " Trot " was given. On the order " Canter," however, *Flash* forgot his manners and made to pass the other ponies : he wished to be in the lead. Pamela dropped her hands close to his withers and said gently, " Stop it, *Flash* ! " The naughty pony decided to behave himself ; he cantered quietly along.

Pamela noticed that the Lady Judge would signal to the children, one at a time, to halt in the centre of the Ring. It puzzled her to see that one line of children's ponies was being formed to the right of the Judges' stand ; another to the left. Presently the Judge signalled to Pamela to halt and to join the line on the right side of this stand. Here she was amused (and pleased) to see that she was next to the little friend who rode just ahead of her when they had all entered the Ring.

When this friend said, " We are lucky, you know," Pamela did not understand until the other told her that the winners would be chosen from *their* rank of competitors and that the children in the other

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A GROUP OF YOUNGSTERS AWAITING THEIR CLASS TO BE CALLED AT A HORSE SHOW.

rank would " get the gate," or, in less slangy words, would have no further chance.

The Lady Judge then approached the boy who had been the first to be called up to the right side of the Judges' stand, and told him to " give a show." As he had previous experience—had, in fact, won several prizes at other horse shows—he knew what was expected of him. He started at a walk ; trotted ; cantered in a semicircle, making his pony " lead " with its right leg and then, moving in the opposite direction, " lead " with its left leg.

Next came a little girl, who gave the same smooth kind of performance. After her, a boy—who did less well. Pamela was glad to see that all he did was to canter the length of the Ring without doing any " fancy bits " : she felt that *Flash* would be too excited to carry out in public what she had only recently taught him to do more or less in private, and at home.

Pamela's friend, who was next, did rather well ; very kindly, when she returned, she said to Pam, " Your turn now ; but wait till the Judge tells you."

Our little heroine was feeling nervous, for this was her first appearance at a horse show, and she did not much like having to perform all by herself. Still, when the Judge came up to her and said, " Well, Number Eight, let me see how your pony goes," she followed the example of the other children. She performed most creditably, although she did not ask *Flash* to canter in circles and " change his leads " from right leg to left. Half a dozen others followed.

The Judges spent some time in deciding who were

the winners. During this time the competitors watched them anxiously. At last the prize-ribbons were fixed to the ponies' bridles.

The first prize—as perhaps you have guessed—went to that boy who had made his mount " change his leads " ; the second prize to a girl ; the third to Pamela's sweet little friend ; and the fourth—oh ! you've guessed this too ?—well, the fourth went to Pamela herself.

As, with a flush of happiness on her pretty face, she dismounted, the Knight shook her by the hand and exclaimed, " Well done, Pam ! One of these days you'll win a first prize."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

REHEARSING FOR OLYMPIA

YOU remember that Pamela took part in a horse show and how delighted she was to win the fourth prize in the children's class. Well, soon after this, she received a thrilling invitation to join the group of boys and girls who belonged to the Cotswold Branch of the Pony Club and who intended giving an exhibition at the International Horse Show in June 1935.

"Thrilling!" That is putting it very mildly. But it did not rest with her to decide. When, however, her parents consulted the Knight (Pamela's great friend), he said, "Accept, of course! It will do your little daughter the world of good to be trained for this riding display. There's another thing too: it will give her confidence—and confidence she *must* have—to ride in public at other shows and exhibitions."

Rehearsals began in mid-April. But *Flash* proved himself a rogue, a rascal, and a scamp. He simply would not behave properly when he was called upon to go through—and *over*—certain difficult and tricky jumps. Oh, he could easily have jumped these obstacles if he had wished to; apparently he didn't wish to jump them! The fact that he had to perform in company with a dozen other ponies made him so

excited that he became unridable ; perhaps, too, he was like certain people (you have met them ?) in that he liked to have the centre of the stage to himself —to be " the only pebble on the beach."

" This is terrible," thought Pamela. " What am I to do ? "

Her problem was solved by a kind major, who, as every one knew, was the friend of all children. He happened to be present at one of the rehearsals and saw the perfectly outrageous manner in which *Flash* behaved. He made himself known to her parents, and said, " Please allow me to lend your very charming little daughter "—gallant fellows, these majors !—" one of my many ponies. I shall choose a mount that will cause you no anxiety—a mount that has an even temper and is used to performing in company. *Flash*, although a nice little creature, is far too hghly strung to be used in the children's riding display at Olympia."

And so, the very next day, Pamela found herself riding the Major's pony, a piebald named *Mother Christmas*. Like Santa Claus, this mare loved children and let them do anything they liked with her—that is, anything reasonable. With Pamela on her back, *Mother Christmas* was as patient as a mother with her child. When they came to the big test—jumping through a hoop that was alight—the dear old (but not so terribly old) mare thought less of herself than of her rider, and went through the fiery hoop as though it were a joke.

The rehearsals were admirably managed by the grown-ups in charge. Pamela was never frightened

when called upon to do such things as she had not even dreamt of doing on horseback; indeed, she loved it all and found it all extremely interesting. And well she might find it interesting. There were various tests and jumps, some of them unusual and none too easy: jumps over small hurdles, jumps over chairs, jumps over (imitation) barbed wire, jumps over a tennis net, jumps over a pole decorated with flags: so many kinds, with so many variations, that to tell you them all would be to make you think you were reading a Harrods' catalogue! But it is worth knowing that the sixteen competitors were trained at first in two lots of eight, and that finally, for a much shorter time, the sixteen rehearsed all together.

And then Olympia! . . .

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

AT OLYMPIA

PAMELA had immensely enjoyed the rehearsals, at the end of which she felt confident that she would at least play her part satisfactorily as a member of the team that was to give a display as by the children of the Cotswold Branch of the Pony Club at Olympia.

But she was glad when, at last, the International Horse Show Week started. The children's performances began on the Monday after the Show opened, and, at the rate of two a day (about 2.30 and 7.45), they continued until the end of the week, including the Saturday.

Pamela and her mother went to a very fashionable Park Lane hotel, from which Olympia was quickly, and easily, reached by driving through Hyde Park. Being very young, Pamela was not allowed to have her meals in the large and gay restaurant downstairs. But she soon realised that, with two performances daily at the Horse Show, a comfortable and airy sitting-room in which to eat and to rest was the very best place for a little girl of her age when she was neither at Olympia nor in bed. As it happened, too, late June had a heat wave: Pam, therefore, was delighted when she was awake at the hotel, to

relax by gazing on to Hyde Park from her sitting-room windows.

Not that she wished to be away from Olympia ! For Olympia during the International Horse Show is always a gay and cheerful place. Military bands play lively music (some of the horses and ponies find it a little too lively) ; well-dressed women in their filmy summer frocks make the scene yet more charming, yet more bright ; well-groomed men give it distinction ; the arena is lined by banks of flowers, which look as though they have grown there—actually they are " planted " there only for the duration of the Show ; and throughout this particular week the attendance was excellent, especially in the evenings, when, after the heat of the day, crowds went to the Show for refreshment other than food.

The Cotswold team of children numbered fourteen, of whom Pamela was the youngest, save one. They had to be in the Collecting Ring with their ponies half an hour before their performance was due to begin ; and at Olympia half an hour before that.

Actually, they did not, on the Monday, have to begin without knowing what it was like to perform at Olympia, for on the previous day an ordinary dress-rehearsal was held there in the morning and a full dress-rehearsal in the afternoon ; this thoughtful arrangement made them all feel very much less nervous. In fact, by the Monday morning they were all quite confident—a blissful and desirable state in which they were to remain throughout the Show.

At the end of each performance the members of

the team—like those of all the teams in the other events—saluted the Royal Box before leaving the arena.

Pamela, I am glad to say, performed with credit, except for one minor mishap. On the Thursday evening, her pony (*Mother Christmas*) took a dislike to the fiery jump and refused to jump it again. One can't altogether blame *Mother Christmas* for that, because there was a huge blaze—two long iron poles, to which was attached a wire-netting bag filled with straw drenched with petrol: "a bit too hot," as an onlooker remarked!

The children were dressed as toy soldiers, in red jackets and blue overalls with a red stripe down each leg, black peaked tall hats with red feather ornaments in front, white belts and batons. They looked very charming as they jumped into the arena in pairs through the windows of a sham fort. There were six jumps ranged round the arena, consisting of a white fence, imitation barbed wire, deck chairs, a hammock with a dummy, a gate with an arch over it, and a wall with an herbaceous border in front; the other jumps were brought in and removed quickly by the attendants as soon as the team had been over them. Amongst these were five large wooden horse-shoes, painted silver, jumped by the children one after the other, a "running pole" draped in flags, a half-moon, a kitchen range, and a tennis-net for the whole team, while there was also a hoop for the smaller ponies to jump through—a motor-bicycle and a very realistic wooden tiger for the bigger ones.

On the Saturday night, fairyland having come to an end, Pamela and her mother, several other children with their parents, and a couple of friends " celebrated " by having supper at the hotel and watching the lovely cabaret show. Pamela's mother confessed afterwards that she felt tired as she sat there : but the children didn't !

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

PAMELA'S FIRST EXPERIENCES IN THE HUNTING-FIELD

AFTER Pamela had returned to the country at the conclusion of the International Horse Show, she resumed her daily rides on *Flash*, who seemed most anxious to atone for the bad behaviour which had robbed him of the fun of carrying his young mistress at Olympia. In fact, during the weeks which followed, his manners were of the best, and he and Pamela became greater friends than ever before.

The Knight took holidays in August and rode almost daily with Pam ; one morning he caused her the thrill of her young life by saying he was going to suggest to her Daddy that she should be introduced, without further delay, to the mysteries, as well as the joys, of the hunting-field !

" Look here, old man," said the Knight to Pamela's father, " your little girl is now quite able to hold her own if she follows hounds, provided, of course, that you see to it that she goes about it the right way."

Pamela's father murmured : " Go ahead and tell me about it, as I, too, would like her to hunt if you think the time has come for her to start doing so."

" First of all," the Knight announced, " Pam must be given a very quiet pony, and one that has been previously hunted by young children for two or three seasons ; such an animal will display no signs of excitability either when he encounters hounds at the Meet, or at those times when he is called upon to gallop after them, and, of course, such a pony must be a safe jumper as well. I know of just the right pony, which has been outgrown by the little daughter of one of my friends.

" Also, I will lend you my second horseman, who knows every inch of this beautiful Cotswold country, and all that Pam will have to do is to stick by his side and benefit from the sound advice he will give her.

" As to *Flash*, you had better loan him to that boy who put him so well over the jumps when Pamela returned from the Riding Establishment, and after he has hunted him throughout this season, the pony will possibly have settled down and be a safe enough ride for Pam to hunt next year."

Sometimes dreams come true, and this certainly was the case when a 13.2 hands roan pony came into Pamela's possession just in time for the " cubbing " in September. This small hunter was called *Dainty*, and came from the Welsh hills, strong, temperate, and a marvellous jumper ; Pam, of course, was sorry to bid a temporary good-bye to *Flash*, but the boy who rode him away to his own stables assured her that her pet would be very kindly treated, and, after all, it still was *her* pony and would be returned to her in the spring.

At last the morning dawned when an early cup of tea awoke Pamela out of a sound sleep in the very early hours of a fine mid-September day. She yawned, felt "fuzzled," but soon jumped out of bed with a shout of joy, realising that this was THE DAY OF DAYS . . . that after a three-mile hack to the Meet, she, *Dainty*, and the Knight's groom, would embark upon that great adventure rightly called "the sport of Kings," and indulged in by old and young, rich and poor. In the field, only ONE class, one age, one name—*Fox hunters* !

Pamela found the Knight waiting for her at the Meet, and he called her to his side and gave her some useful advice regarding her first day's outing with hounds. Presently, pink coats and hounds came up at a walk, and the Master and hunt servants halted a few yards away from where she and her friend were standing. With a curt "follow me," the Knight rode straight up to the M.F.H. and, lifting his hat, said :

"This is young Pamela ——, whose parents you know well, and they have asked me to express the hope that you will allow her the privilege of being initiated to hunting through following your hounds."

Pamela, of course, was very shy, and felt the blood rushing to her cheeks, but the Master at once put her at her ease by greeting her with a charming smile and saying that all children were very welcome in his Hunt.

Introductions over, the Knight placed Pam in charge of his groom, telling him to keep well in the

rear of the Hunt and take her home before she tired. "Not more than an hour's hunting to-day," she heard him say, but was relieved to catch the words "an extra half-hour next time, and then two full hours with hounds thereafter."

Of course, Pamela had thought that as soon as hounds moved off to draw the first covert, a fox would be found at once and a wild gallop follow; hence she felt a wee bit disappointed when nothing happened for what seemed to be ages—actually, a matter of twenty minutes of waiting.

The groom explained to Pam that hounds were "drawing" that small wood yonder; in other words, they hoped to find a young fox (called a cub) hiding there and to force him to run out into the open . . . after which the chase would begin.

About thirty people had come out (the groom told her that four or five times that number would be seen once the real hunting season started), and Pam noticed that they kept perfectly still—eyes fixed on those hounds which one caught sight of as they occasionally came out of the wood and then dashed in again when they heard a certain note blown on the Master's horn.

Some of the big horses, especially the thoroughbreds, showed signs of impatience at thus being made to stand still, but *Dainty* paid no attention to this—actually pretending to be bored!

Suddenly the Master emerged from the wood, and one of the whips raised his velvet cap and pointed it with outstretched arm to fields lying beyond, whereupon the Master blowing "GONE AWAY" on

his horn, galloped with his hounds in the direction to which the whip's cap had pointed.

Pamela's first impulse was to rush off in the M.F.H.'s wake, but the groom quietly said to her: "Stand still, Miss," and showed her that the thirty odd riders of the Field were now making for the field adjoining that over which the Master and hounds were racing, and explained that the cub might take it into his head to double back to where he had started from, in which case the Master would require lots of room, something which would be denied him if the Field were following close upon his heels.

Pamela now found herself galloping along with the Field, but actually at its tail-end, because beginners —especially children—must never (the Knight told her) gain their experience in the hunting-field at the cost of causing even the slightest inconvenience to their elders. She had her pony well in hand, and was thrilled by this gallop which had a definite objective—that of keeping within sight, when possible, of the hounds and of being there or thereabouts at the time of the fox's eventual destruction.

It so happened that this cub was a well-grown specimen, full of courage and endurance, and was providing hounds with a thoroughly sporting chase. On and on he sped, over fine grassland with low stone walls separating the fields, and Pamela popped over at least half a dozen walls during the half-hour which the run lasted.

When the cub was finally killed, hounds had outdistanced their followers by quite a long way, but every one had thoroughly enjoyed the thrill of this

long gallop, and perhaps a little girl on a roan pony was the happiest mortal of the whole kingdom on that particular morning.

The Knight's groom now suggested that Pamela should dismount and eat the sandwiches which her mother had placed in her pocket. While she was thus " stretching her legs," she noted that the groom had loosened both *Dainty's* girths and those of his own horse, just to make them feel " comfy " before the girths were re-tightened for the trek home.

The cub had conveniently headed in the direction of Pamela's home, so when she was in the saddle again the groom told her that they had only two miles to go—taking short cuts across the fields.

Pam's mother was having breakfast when her daughter rushed into the house, all aglow with happiness in consequence of her wonderful ride.

Our little heroine thought it must be lunch-time when she saw Mummy in the dining-room, but was laughingly informed that the clock had only just struck nine. It was only *then* that Pamela realised that she had left home at 6 a.m., which all goes to prove that when one is thoroughly enjoying oneself one loses count of time.

" Have an egg and tea, Pamela," her mother said, " and then go and rest a bit; you can tell me all about your morning's sport when I come up. I am very proud to think that my little girl may some day be following hounds astride a blood hunter instead of a roan pony . . . but in the meantime get all the fun you can out of the roan pony."

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

"CHILDREN'S DAY" WITH HOUNDS

BY the time Christmas holidays were in full swing, Pamela had gained a small measure of experience in the hunting-field—to say nothing of a vast amount of enjoyment.

Almost every Hunt in England sets a day aside which is devoted to children, by which I mean that "Children's Day" is a Meet held for their sole benefit and enjoyment; the grown-ups stay at home —or are merely allowed to look on—except in a few cases when they accompany a child in order to act as his or her guide.

As I told you, this is a true story, and it so happened that I was spending the Christmas holidays in the Cotswolds and prevailed upon Pamela's parents to let me take her to this Children's Meet, on the plea that she was less experienced than the other youngsters, who had been hunting for some time, and thus needed a grown-up to look after her.

We started off on a bright, but rather cold, morning in January for the Meet, held in the grounds of a local sportman's residence, Pamela riding *Dainty*, and I astride the grey horse which you saw the groom riding in the picture illustrating the preceding chapter.

When we reached the Meet, all the children were

[*W. Dennis Moss.*

[*W. Dennis Moss.*

PAMELA AT THE CHILDREN'S DAY MEET.

asked to dismount and go into the house, where the M.F.H. delivered a brief, but most interesting, "lecture" to the boys and girls.

First of all, the youngsters were told that they must realise, throughout their present and future hunting days, that the enjoyment of this wonderful sport was only made possible through the courtesy of land-owners and the farmers of Great Britain, and that young and old alike must show their appreciation of this favour by constantly bearing in mind four things, namely: Never gallop over corn or seeds; take to the hedges if you must go through a sown field. Always shut gates if you are the last to pass through, otherwise cattle will stray and cause untold damage and waste of time to the farmer. Be courteous, not only to your fellow-sportsmen in the field, but especially so to labourers and farm hands you run across during the day's adventures. Do not attempt to school a young pony over some one else's walls and fences, and *do not jump* unless hounds are running.

The Master, at the conclusion of his address, told the youngsters that their host had a surprise for them in the dining-room, and from what I saw of it such surprise was a big one, consisting, as it did, of an amazing display of every conceivable kind of sandwich, coupled with an incredible variety of cakes.

When we were told it was time to mount and join both Master and hounds, who were waiting for us in front of a near-by "Pub," the sun was shining

brightly, and all the youthful riders were in fine spirits—looking forward to the day's sport.

As soon as the entire pack (of children) had halted at a respectful distance from the Master and his hounds, the M.F.H. said to his followers :

" You may notice that I only have one whip out to-day, having given the second whip a day's holiday ; I therefore call upon Richard Dix (who was the son of the least prosperous but most popular farmer of the district) to whip in for us."

Mounted on a useful but somewhat uncouth-looking cob, Richard shyly came up alongside the Master and, lifting his cap, murmured, " Thank you, sir."

The Master again addressed his " Field," telling them that he had decided to appoint young Brown (to whom you will remember *Flash* had been loaned for the season by Pamela) as Field-Master for that day. He added : " Any boy or girl who disobeys his instructions may possibly be asked to go home, so keep still when he tells you to do so." He then added, with a smile, " We are all going to have a jolly good time, and I hope my hounds will find and kill a fox for us before the day is much older."

The first two coverts were drawn blank, and some of the children began to grow a bit restless. Pamela kept her eye on the Field-Master, and more especially on his mount, *Flash*, who was behaving fairly well, despite his annoyance at standing still instead of being allowed to gallop on.

Suddenly the notes of " Gone away " resounded through the air, and the gay cavalcade bounded

forward like greyhounds released from their leashes.

Now, it so happened that when we reached a certain field, the gate was a particularly heavy one, and threatened to swing back upon the impetuous youngsters while they were squeezing their way through, so I dismounted and held it open until the very last rider was on his way. This made me lose a good five minutes, and by the time I was on my horse again, not a rider was in sight!

I was, of course, worried about my charge and had visions of Pam being bolted with, or perhaps thrown through *Dainty* taking the stone walls at too fast a pace, but presently I ran across stragglers, who told me that Pamela was last seen following close in the wake of hounds and fox, and, thus reassured, I clapped spurs into the gallant grey and decided to have a bit of fun myself, and incidentally to catch up with Pamela as well.

As I galloped on, I passed tired children on very tired ponies; they were walking along in groups of twos and threes, and had obviously found the pace too hot for them.

Where were hounds? Would I ever catch up with them? Above all, where was Pam?

Suddenly I caught sight, two fields away, of half a dozen riderless horses standing still, surrounded by hounds, and knew that both Master and "Field" had dismounted.

When I drew up alongside, I saw the Master, his whip, and deputy-whip, and four boys; also a little girl, with a fox's brush (tail) in her hand, leaning

against a roan pony, which looked tired but pleased with itself.

The Master greeted me with a wink, and tried to make his voice sound harsh when thus admonishing me:

"I thought you were with us to-day in order to look after Pamela, instead of which you lost hounds and your charge as well. Anyhow, next year Pamela will need no chaperon on Children's Day. Look at her cheeks, and you will see why."

There stood my little friend, flushed and supremely happy; not only was she blushing with joy, but she bore a tiny dab of something red on either cheek . . . she had been "blooded," which is a ceremony performed only by Masters of Hounds when an intrepid rider has, for the first time, been in at the death of that somewhat maligned but nevertheless gallant animal, known as a Fox.

THE END